



# Open Channels

## January 5, 2004 — MVD changed to 2012 organization

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In addition to a new year (and for me, a new name!), 2004 also ushered in a new Corps organization.

With the various meetings, e-mails, charts, web sites, etc., available to us over the past months, I believe division employees understood the fact that when we returned to work following the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the Mississippi Valley Division would be a different organization. However, I believe that's where the understanding ended. Many still want to know "What's USACE 2012 all about?" and "Why are we doing it?" The short answer is so we won't become history. Part of the long answer is as follows (*taken from remarks given by Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers, Chief of Engineers, during a town hall meeting at Headquarters Dec. 10, 2003*):

"... The nation cannot afford to have what happened to the Civil Aeronautics Board happen to the Corps of Engineers. The CAB was a pretty powerful federal aviation agency. But President Reagan deregulated the airline industry and changed the CAB's environment. They had an opportunity to change their culture, but they said, 'We like the way we've always been, so we're not changing.'

"Where is the Civil Aeronautics Board today? It doesn't exist. They broke 'em up and gave their functions to other federal agencies.

"We can't let that happen to the Corps of Engineers, because we're too vital to this nation. The country has become comfortable turning to us, giving us the tough ones, and having us come through. Whenever we transition from peace to conflict, or from conflict back to peace, we're the go-to agency.

"I got called to testify before Congress a couple of months ago. Congress wanted to know if we have any plans to do away with the Corps of Engineers. One question they asked me was, 'General, give us an example of another country that has a Corps of Engineers and how it operates.'

"And I said, 'I can't, because no other country has anything like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. We're unique, and I think it gives our country a tremendous advantage.'

"So we can't let what happened to the Civil Aeronautics Board happen to the Corps of Engineers. We must reorganize ourselves to remain the agency of choice. We have to operate more like a business, because our customers have other choices. We must always work to get better.

That's what the learning organization does for us. That's what operating virtually will help do. And becoming a team of teams is a key enabler."

Change is never easy, but it is necessary if we want to improve – whether it's individually or as an organization. The Corps can't just stand still. Our partners and customers are frustrated, telling us: "You all aren't listening. Your processes are daunting; we don't understand them. You don't partner like a partner. When we deal with one part of the Corps, it's not like dealing with another part."

And it's not like change is new to us. For more than two hundred years, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has served the nation in multiple ways, and has always transformed to meet the nation's changing needs and priorities. We will do so once again.

However, not knowing really what to expect, when I came back to work after the holidays, I asked John (Rickey) where my desk was. He smiled and replied, "Well, if you were as flexible as you're supposed to be under 2012, you'd be carrying it with you." I think I need to get a larger briefcase.

We will improve our efficiency and effectiveness. We will become a 'teams of teams' that will work more closely, more efficiently and with greater transparency and openness. We will become a learning organization by sharing expertise, experience and lessons learned. And we will continue to improve.



# 2012

**One Team –**

**A Learning  
Organization –**

**Capable of  
Operating Virtually**

By Dan Hitchings

What is 2012? Why are we doing another “change initiative?” Is this just another flavor of the month? How will it affect me? These are some of the questions I have had as we have been involved in developing and implementing USACE 2012.

In this article I will share with you what I know about the implementation of 2012 in the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) and answer some of these questions. First, I will tell you that I don’t have all the answers. However, I will tell you everything I can, as soon as I can. The Chief of Engineers has stated “Nobody’s going out the door with a pink slip,” so while you may see a change in what you do or how you do your job you don’t have to worry about losing your employment.

The USACE 2012 plan mandates that we organize and establish procedures that are consistent with the USACE wide plan. We refer to this as “above the line.” There are many aspects where we in MVD have discretion to decide how we will implement requirements of the plan - “below the line.”



**Dan Hitchings, director of the Regional Business Directorate, is the driving force behind USACE 2012 and the positive impacts it will have on the Mississippi Valley Division.**

Just like anything you do that is new, there are many uncertainties that we face; you learn as you go.

MVD commander, Brig. Gen. Don T. Riley, asked Col. Jack V. Scherer, Memphis District commander, and me to serve as the co-project managers for implementing USACE 2012 within MVD. We first established a project delivery team (PDT) with members from the division headquarters and each MVD district.

Our first task was to develop a PMP or Implementation Plan to layout all the work required to accomplish the implementation.

This plan was prepared in final draft and submitted to HQUSACE for review. We received their feedback on Nov. 21, and are currently incorporating their comments.

USACE 2012 is about re-engineered work processes, increased efficiency, improved quality of support to districts, and reduced costs. First, it is about a major change in our culture starting at the headquarters. It requires getting the division and HQUSACE to synchronize and create a single headquarters that is more responsive to district needs.

(see 2012, next page)



## **-2012-**

It is about eliminating the layering and redundancy in the operations so we can speed up the delivery of products and services to our customers. This requires a substantial change in style and behavior for many of us who have been accustomed to the way things have operated for many years.

Across the Corps we will be using more inter-district teams, using the best people for the task from across the division and the Corps working as *One team*. The division and HQUSACE personnel will also be on these teams to provide policy input early in the process rather than review results, provide comments and return them to the district for correction. We must use all the talents and knowledge available in the Corps to ensure we do it right the first time.

Using people outside our districts will require using all the technology we have at our disposal to share information and have continuous participation so we can truly be *Capable of Operating Virtually*.

To support the increased use of people and resources from other districts and divisions, the new Regional Business Directorate of the Major Support Commands (MSC) will work with all the MVD districts to manage our workforce, and share work and personnel regionally.

This will be a collaborative effort involving division and district participation. We will ensure MVD maintains the technical capability to accomplish our mission without unnecessary redundancies. By managing our workforce and workload we will deliver the best products for our customers.

We will make organizational changes in the headquarters (HQUSACE and division) that strengthen teams. We will no longer be organized functionally.



Cross-functional teams will be established at the Washington level called Regional Integration Teams (RITs), one for each division office. This team will have team members from technical and support functions dedicated to serving the needs of the districts by providing Washington level input and coordination in support of project execution. The MSC will establish District Support Teams, composed of technical and support personnel focused on supporting individual districts. In each case, the teams will be augmented with additional team members, as needed, to support specific requirements.

Communities of practice are the enablers to enhance technical expertise. In a learning organization the community of practice is a focal point for positive change by supporting the functional capabilities and sharing learning across organizational boundaries. The functional leaders at the Washington level will lead the major communities of practice. Individuals for the districts and divisions will be heavily involved to ensure learning is captured and shared.

Support functions will change to provide more cost-effective services. They fall into two categories. Legal, Safety, EEO, HR and IR will be organized at the national level. Legal and HR will be part of a national team but will have individuals located at and dedicated to support MVD. Safety, EEO and IR will also be part of a national team; however, individuals will support both MVD and LRD.

Some people will be located at each MSC. Logistics, Public Affairs, Contracting and Information Management will be organized at the regional level. All individuals within these regional support functions will work for the functional manager at the MSC. Project Delivery Teams have been formed for each support function to develop a plan for best meeting the support needs across the region.

There are many details still to be worked out as we aggressively implement the USACE 2012 plan. By working collaboratively and performing as a learning organization we will minimize the uncertainties.





## Advantages of 2012

Products that represent both the federal government interest  
and the needs of the partner or customer



Challenging work

Working within teams

Access to Lessons  
Learned and Experts



Robust solutions

Information from across the organization  
through our new data systems

## 2012 Eliminates

Waiting for higher authority to make a decision or respond  
Solutions that only reflect a limited range of understanding of the problem  
Stovepipe data calls

## Our New Organization

